Rev. 12/17/20 (Blue)

THE BATMAN

by

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Based on characters from DC

Batman created by Bob Kane and Bill Finger

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WHITE FEBURARY SHOOTING DRAFT

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1 BLACK SCREEN 1

The quiet hum of CITY TRAFFIC and DISTANT SIRENS. Gradually, we make out something unnerving, right beside us: **SOMEONE BREATHING**... A MASSIVE RED TITLE FADES UP:

"T H E B A T M A N"

HOLD; then SMASH OUT OF THE BLACKNESS TO REVEAL --

2 AN OUT OF FOCUS BINOCULAR POV - DUSK 2

We FOCUS, SEARCHING THE FACADE OF AN OPULENT TOWNHOUSE... The **BREATHING SUDDENLY QUIETS** as a SHAPE APPEARS IN A WINDOW -- a LITTLE RED NINJA gazes out, clutching a small sword. The ninja spins, brandishing the sword as TWO SHAPES enter behind him -- a WOMAN, late 30s, dressed as a WITCH -- and a MAN, late 50s, in a WELL-CUT SUIT.

The little ninja rushes in, "stabbing" the Man, who collapses melodramatically. The Woman smiles -- speaks to the ninja, and he grabs a PUMPKIN CANDY BUCKET as they start to exit. The Man sits up, yells after them; the ninja runs back for a hug. Finally, the ninja and Woman exit, LEAVING THE MAN ALONE. He grows SOBER. As the Man pulls himself up, the **BREATHING BESIDE US RESUMES**...

3 INT. OPULENT TOWNHOUSE - DIMLY-LIGHTED STUDY - NIGHT 3

In the light of the flickering TV, we see now the Man is handsome, distinguished. He stands, sipping scotch, watching THE NEWS; a CHYRON reads, "GOTHAM MAYORAL RACE":

FEMALE NEWSCASTER (ON TV)
Just-released polls have incumbent mayor, Don Mitchell, Jr. and twenty-eight year old grassroots challenger, Bella Reál in a dead heat. Things certainly got hot last night in their final debate before next Tuesday's election...

As the Man anxiously watches the DEBATE CLIP, we realize: he is MAYOR MITCHELL; his female challenger, BELLA REÁL, young, intelligent, a force of nature, shares the stage --

MAYOR MITCHELL (ON TV)
Now my young opponent here wants to gut the Gotham Renewal Program established by the great Thomas Wayne, cutting the funds for vital projects like our sea wall, and the safety net for those in need--

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

BELLA REÁL (ON TV)
-- the Renewal Program is broken! The city's been "renewing" for twenty years, look where it's gotten us! Crime has skyrocketed!

MAYOR MITCHELL (ON TV)
Now wait a minute -- hold on -- !

BELLA REÁL (ON TV)
Murder and drug use are at historic highs! We have a masked vigilante running the streets!

MAYOR MITCHELL (ON TV)
-- under my administration the Gotham PD dealt major blows against organized crime and drug trafficking! The Salvatore Maroni case was the biggest drug bust in city history --

BELLA REÁL (ON TV)
-- but drops and other drugs are still rampant! It's gotten worse!

MAYOR MITCHELL (ON TV)
I'm not saying there isn't work to do -- but listen -- I have a beautiful wife and young son, ok? I will not rest until this city is safe for them -- and all our citizens!

Mitchell turns, startled, as a PHONE RINGS. As he EXITS FRAME to answer, we STAY on a DARK HALL BEHIND THE STUDY -- on the wall by the doorway, we see a framed headline: **"MARONI DRUG BUST! MAYOR'S STING OPERATION HISTORIC".**

As the TV brightens, we SEE for the first time, **SOMEONE IS IN THE HALL.** Barely visible, the Figure wears a DARK, OLIVE GREEN HOOD -- a homemade executioner's mask, with PRESCRIPTION AVIATOR GLASSES bizarrely outside the hood.

MAYOR MITCHELL (O.S.)
Hey. Yeah, I'm watching GC1...

As Mitchell PACES IN AND OUT OF FRAME, the Figure's hooded head ominously tracks him...

MAYOR MITCHELL (O.S.)
Why is she still tied -- I thought we were getting a bump in the new Post poll...? Ok, you know what? I can't, I can't watch this anymore -- call me in the morning --

We HEAR the phone hang up, and Mitchell RE-ENTERS FRAME, agitated; as he SHUTS OFF THE TV, the HALL BEHIND HIM SUDDENLY GOES DARK, the **FIGURE NO LONGER IN SIGHT.**

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2) 3

Mitchell stands there, drink in hand; starts to sip, as -- **THE FIGURE LURCHES OUT THE DARK** -- **FRANTICALLY CLUBBING HIM OVER AND OVER** -- suddenly, the **WEAPON SLIPS LOOSE** -- it **SKITTERS** right at us and **STOPS. A GLEAMING METAL TOOL.** Whatever it is, it's WET with blood. The Figure turns, PANTING, rises off the motionless victim, trudges over to us... A GLOVED HAND retrieves the strange weapon.

The Figure walks back, regarding the victim for a long, creepy moment... then stretches its arms as far as they will go, LOUDLY UNSPOOLING a LONG PIECE OF SILVER DUCT TAPE... And with a LOW RUMBLE OF THUNDER, we SLAM INTO --

4 BLACKNESS AGAIN... 4

We HEAR PATTERING RAIN as a HYPNOTIC VOICE OVER begins:

VOICE OVER
Thursday, October thirty-first...

A GAS ARC BULB BURNS to life... glowing BRIGHTER... BRIGHTER... REVEALING: We're INSIDE A SEARCHLIGHT...

5 EXT. ROOFTOP - **ON THE RUSTED SEARCHLIGHT** - NIGHT 5

As the LIGHT INTENSIFIES -- RAINDROPS ILLUMINATE -- BEATING and DANCING CHAOTICALLY on the hot lens --

6 EXT. RAINY GOTHAM STREETS - HIGH ANGLE - NIGHT 6

A bacchanalian Times Square vibe. **COSTUMED HALLOWEEN REVELERS** swarm wet sidewalks in the glow of NEON and LED.

VOICE OVER
The city streets are crowded for the holiday, even with the rain...

MOVING POV - ON THE SIDEWALK

We PUSH INTO the sea of COSPLAYERS, CLUBBERS, TOURISTS...

VOICE OVER
Hidden in the chaos... is the element. Waiting to strike like snakes at the decent... the vulnerable...

A MALE FIGURE suddenly ENTERS FRAME --

VOICE OVER
But I'm there too, watching...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOLLOW FROM BEHIND as he WALKS in ARMY JACKET, KNIT CAP, a DUFFEL on his shoulder. He looks like a **DRIFTER**...

SUPER-TIGHT ON THE **DRIFTER'S INTENSE EYES** AS HE WALKS...

VOICE OVER
Two years of nights have turned me into a nocturnal animal... My senses are heightened now... I can almost smell them...

7 EXT. BODEGA - **MOVING POV** TOWARD THE WINDOW - NIGHT 7

PEER IN at the few COSTUMED SHOPPERS inside; a GUY in a HOODIE and YELLOW SAD EMOJI MASK steps to the counter --

VOICE OVER
I must choose my targets carefully...

8 INSIDE 8

Sad Emoji NERVOUSLY PULLS A GUN on the CASHIER!

SAD EMOJI
C'mon...!

9 EXT. COLOSSAL GOTHAM BANK - **MOVING POV** - NIGHT 9

We SPY THREE VANDALS, SPRAY-PAINTING the huge pillars --

VOICE OVER
It's a big city, I can't be everywhere...

THE VANDALS wear GUY FAWKES MASKS -- one LIGHTS A MOLOTOV COCKTAIL -- HURLS IT, SHATTERING THE GLASS FRONT DOOR --

10 INT. A SPEEDING ELEVATED TRAIN - **LURKING POV** - NIGHT 10

WE PEER THROUGH the CONNECTING DOOR INTO THE CAR AHEAD -- where EIGHT GANG MEMBERS in SKULL FACE PAINT carouse --

VOICE OVER
But they don't know where I am...

11 THE CAR AHEAD 11

The gang crowds, jockeying to see a CELLPHONE VIDEO.

TIGHT ON THE VIDEO

THE GANG striding through a park -- ONE points at a RANDOM JOGGER -- ANOTHER responds, PUNCHING HIM OUT!

THE GANG WATCHING THE CELLPHONE

recoils with LAUGHTER -- when THE GANG LEADER notices a LONE PASSENGER rising as the TRAIN SLOWS. He turns to a YOUNGER MEMBER, nodding toward the Passenger with a menacing smile -- as the Young Member looks anxiously --

12 EXT. A SHADOWY SPACE - NIGHT 12

FINGERS QUICKLY SMEAR BLACK CAMO PAINT around fierce eyes, veiled in darkness -- as we spot THE DRIFTER'S ARMY DUFFLE on wet ground -- inside, we GLIMPSE **THE BAT COWL!**

13 EXT. ROOFTOP - **ON THE RUSTED SEARCHLIGHT** - NIGHT 13

A crude but **ICONIC BAT SYMBOL** BLAZES at its center --

VOICE OVER
We have a signal now... for when I'm needed...

REVEAL **A SILHOUETTED MAN** beside the light, waiting --

VOICE OVER
But when that light hits the sky, it's not just a call...

He's perched atop an **ABANDONED, HALF-BUILT SKYSCRAPER** -- THE BRIGHT BEAM REACHES UPWARDS, sparkling in the rain --

VOICE OVER
It's a warning. To them...

14 OUTSIDE THE BODEGA 14

Sad Emoji BOLTS OUT toward a DARK ALLEY -- when he spots TWO PEDESTRIANS GAPING UP AT THE SKY IN ALARM -- he slows, peering up to SEE -- **THE BAT SIGNAL LOOMING!**

VOICE OVER
Fear is a tool...

Sad Emoji stops, panic dawning as he turns to the DARK ALLEY -- he backs away, into the street -- a CAR SKIDS, HITTING HIM! He DROPS -- but fear lifts him, and he just keeps running -- the sounds of a HELICOPTER grow as we --

15 EXT. COLOSSAL GOTHAM BANK - NIGHT 15

ON A VANDAL -- hearing the copter, he peers up at -- A POLICE CHOPPER SOARING PAST **THE BAT SIGNAL IN THE CLOUDS!**

VOICE OVER
They think I'm hiding in the shadows...

He drops his spray can, startled as it CLATTERS! It rolls ominously under a DARK ARCHWAY -- he stares, chilled --

VOICE OVER
But I am the shadows.

A SIREN APPROACHES -- the VANDAL SPINS -- joining the others as THEY FLEE -- we see the painted letters spell "**BROKE!**" on the pillars; behind, A FIRE RAGES in the building -- FLAMES RISE as a MENACING LOW RUMBLE BUILDS -- and with a STARTLING BURST of METALLIC SCREECHING, we --

16 EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN PLATFORM - **POURING RAIN** - NIGHT 16

The TRAIN SCREECHES TO A STOP -- our Lone Passenger emerges onto the deserted platform -- when he hears FOOTSTEPS and LAUGHTER behind -- he TURNS, startled --

The EIGHT SKULL FACED GANG MEMBERS are behind him. The Young Member stands coiled -- a haunted look in his eyes -- the others watch with PHONES raised, filming --

ONE OF THE MEMBERS
DO it, man...!

He hesitates, losing nerve -- and the Passenger BOLTS!

THE LEADER
GET HIM!

The GANG PLOUGHS FORWARD -- KNOCKING the YOUNG MEMBER DOWN as they RACE PAST -- ! THEY POUNCE ON THE PASSENGER!

CLOSE ON THE YOUNG GANG MEMBER -- the TRAIN ROARING OFF beside him -- WHEN HE SPOTS **THE BAT SIGNAL IN THE SKY!** His EYES DART around -- AS SCREAMS APPROACH; he turns --

The LEADER YANKS the YOUNG MEMBER to his feet -- while the GROUP holds the PASSENGER -- a DREADFUL SILENCE settling over the station as the train roar recedes...

THE LEADER
Now knock his ass out...

The Young Member stares, steeling himself -- WHEN --

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: 16

SLOW **BOOTSTEPS** ECHO from somewhere in the station -- Everyone turns, looking anxiously around -- THE YOUNG MAN'S EYES STARE into a DARK VOID beneath an overhang -- THE OTHERS LOOK TOO -- AS -- CLICK... CLICK... CLICK...

A MASKED FIGURE SHROUDED IN BLACK APPEARS LIKE AN APPARITION FROM THE SHADOWS -- STEPPING INTO THE RAIN -- **IT'S THE BATMAN.**

Everyone stares, unnerved. The Leader smirks, sizing up what he assumes is just another Halloween costume --

THE LEADER
The hell are you supposed to be?

Batman stands there for a long, scary beat, eyes veiled:

THE BATMAN
I'm vengeance.

The unsettling effect of this response has barely an instant to register before BATMAN stalks for THE LEADER --

ONE OF THE GANG MEMBERS
Holy shit -- it's **him** -- !!!

THE LEADER raises his hands ready to fight -- but totally unprepared for this fight -- because -- BATMAN'S MOVEMENTS ARE INCONCEIVABLY BRUTAL AND FAST --

The LEADER SWINGS -- BATMAN SEIZES HIS ARM -- a martial artist's savage grace -- using his attacker's momentum to WRENCH HIM OFF BALANCE -- SNAPPING HIS ARM SICKENINGLY -- THE LEADER SCREAMS -- as BATMAN SILENCES HIM AGAIN WITH A RAIN OF HEAD-SNAPPING JACKHAMMER PUNCHES IN THE FACE -- And like that, the Leader is down, bleeding, moaning --

Batman looks up at the others, who gaze back, stunned -- when a TRIO OF GANG MEMBERS RUSH HIM -- CHAOS -- as BATMAN DISPENSES WITH THEM ALL AT ONCE in a FLUID, BUT TOTALLY STREET-FIGHT REALISTIC ATTACK of KICKS and HARD FIST BLOWS -- BATMAN TAKES HITS TOO -- but his TERRIFYING SKILL keeps impact from landing -- HE'S LIKE A MACHINE --

Panic rips through the gang -- the YOUNG MEMBER'S eyes widen as he SEES -- SOMEONE **PULLING OUT A .38 SPECIAL** --

YOUNG GANG MEMBER
HEY MAN -- NO -- NO -- !

BATMAN SPINS -- SEEING THE GUN -- STARTS RIGHT FOR IT -- **THE GANG MEMBER OPENS FIRE!** BATMAN FLINCHES as the BULLETS DISAPPEAR into his suit's BALLISTIC FIBER -- HE ADVANCES -- GRABBING THE MEMBER'S STILL-FIRING GUN ARM IN ONE HAND -- AND HIS THROAT IN THE OTHER --

16 CONTINUED: (2) 16

AS THE GANG SCATTERS FROM THE BULLETS -- A **BRIGHT BLUE TASER CURRENT ZAPS FROM BATMAN'S GLOVED FINGERS** INTO THE GANG MEMBERS NECK! The Gang Member DROPS, CONVULSING!

Batman slowly lifts his head, looking for more comers... The few remaining on their feet gape -- frozen -- Batman watches -- as they BREAK INTO A RUN -- all -- EXCEPT -- the Youngest Gang Member -- who hesitates briefly under Batman's stone-faced gaze -- in awe -- then, races off...

Batman looks down to discover the Passenger, knocked to the ground in the chaos; he RAISES HIS HANDS, terrified --

PASSENGER
...please don't hurt me...

Batman just gazes strangely, cocking his head, taking a step slowly toward him -- the Passenger BRACES HIMSELF -- as Batman PEERS DOWN at SOMETHING BESIDE THE PASSENGER'S HEAD -- a REFLECTION on the wet ground -- **THE BAT SIGNAL!** Batman LOOKS UP -- wondering how long it's been there --

17 INT. MAYOR'S TOWNHOUSE - **MOVING DOWN THE HALL** - NIGHT 17

FILLED WITH HUSHED COPS now; some turn as they NOTICE US, STARING WITH HARSH EDGE -- **like what is he doing here?!**

REVEAL BATMAN, striding, unfazed, led by **LIEUTENANT JAMES GORDON,** mid-40s -- the Man we saw by the Bat Signal --

AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE STUDY

A UNIFORMED OFFICER steps into Batman's path -- ALARMED --

YOUNG OFFICER
Whoa-whoa-whoa -- police action --

Batman glares down at the Officer's hand on his chest --

GORDON
He's with me, Officer --

YOUNG OFFICER
Are ya-- are ya kiddin' me, sir?
You gonna let him in here...?

GORDON
Let him pass, Martinez.

The Officer turns in disbelief; steps aside --

YOUNG OFFICER (MARTINEZ)
...goddamn freak...

18 THE STUDY 18

MITCHELL lies dead, HEAD MUMMIFIED IN DUCT TAPE -- over his mouth in red it says: "**NO MORE LIES**". INVESTIGATORS TURN IN UTTER SHOCK at BATMAN APPROACHING WITH GORDON --

GORDON
What do we know?

The LEAD is rattled as Batman stares at the body --

GORDON
Detective --

LEAD DETECTIVE
Sorry, Lieutenant... OK, yeah, we got... blunt-force trauma, lacerations on the head. He got hit alotta times, and hard.

GORDON
All this blood's from his head?

LEAD DETECTIVE
Most of it's from his hand --

CLOSE ON BATMAN staring, as the Detective LIFTS THE HAND INTO FRAME, SOFT FOCUS FOREGROUND -- showing GORDON --

LEAD DETECTIVE
Thumb was severed. Killer may have taken it as a trophy --

BATMAN
He was alive when it was cut off.

Appalled, they turn to Batman, who stares at the hand --

BATMAN
Ecchymosis around the wound --

He rises to survey the area. Thrown by the interruption, the Detective watches him go -- turns back to Gordon:

DETECTIVE
Security detail downstairs says the family was out trick-or-treating. Mayor was up here alone. Killer came through the skylight.

Batman sees a PHOTOGRAPHER flash a shot of BLOOD SPATTER on the FRAMED MARONI DRUG BUST HEADLINE on the wall -- when Batman CLOCKS a FRESH GASH IN THE WOOD FLOOR (the spot where the strange metal tool landed in our opening).

18 CONTINUED: 18

He goes to examine it -- the PHOTOGRAPHER suddenly noticing -- it's a detail he obviously missed -- as soon as Batman rises -- he hustles over -- SNAPS A SHOT --

GORDON
You said there was a card --

The Detective hands over AN ENVELOPE. Gordon pulls out a **HALLMARK-STYLE HALLOWEEN CARD:** a CREEPY SKELETON SMILES behind a WIDE-EYED OWL, tapping his shoulder --

GORDON
"From a secret friend... Who?"
(opens card, reads)
"Haven't a clue? Let's play a game, just me and you..."

Batman peers, as Gordon reads the KILLER'S SCRAWL --

GORDON
"What does a liar do when he's dead?"

WEIRD SYMBOLS ARE ETCHED at the bottom -- Gordon pulls a PIECE OF PAPER from the envelope -- **MORE WEIRD SYMBOLS** --

GORDON
There's a cipher too... Any of this... mean anything to you...?

Gordon pointedly shows Batman THE ENVELOPE -- Batman stares, struck -- but before he can speak --

A QUIET, ALARMED VOICE (O.S.)
What's goin' on here?

Everyone turns to see COMMISSIONER PETE SAVAGE, mid-50s -- appalled at the sight of Batman --

GORDON
I asked him to come, Pete --

COMMISSIONER SAVAGE
This is a crime scene -- it's Mitchell, for Chrissakes -- I got press downstairs -- !
(then, darker)
You know I cut you a lotta slack, Jim, 'cuz we got history, but this is way over the line...!

Gordon hands him the card; Savage reads in horror -- when, he sees THE ENVELOPE -- where he -- and we -- DISCOVER it's addressed: "**TO THE BATMAN**" --

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (2) 18

COMMISSIONER SAVAGE
Wait -- he's involved in this -- ?

GORDON
No, no -- he's not involv--

COMMISSIONER SAVAGE
How do you know? He's a -- he's a goddamn vigilante -- he could be a suspect! Whattaya doing to me -- we used to be partners --

GORDON
Pete -- I'm just looking for the connection --

BATMAN (O.S.)
He lies still...

They turn -- to see Batman, eyes fixed on the body --

COMMISSIONER SAVAGE
Excuse me -- ?

GORDON
(getting it, nodding)
The riddle. "What does a liar do when he's dead"...? He lies still.

Unnerved by all this, Savage looks bitterly at Batman --

COMMISSIONER SAVAGE
Jesus... This must be your favorite night of the year, huh pal? Happy Fuckin' Halloween.

AN OFFICER appears in the doorway --

ANOTHER OFFICER
Excuse me, Commissioner -- they're ready for your statement...

Savage sighs, nods -- turns to Gordon, deadly serious --

COMMISSIONER SAVAGE
I want him outta here. Now.

And he leaves. As the POLICE ALL GLARE, Gordon starts to lead Batman out -- but Batman stops, spotting something -- a BLOODY FOOTPRINT, child sized -- Gordon sees it, grim:

GORDON
Yeah, kid was the one found him.

Batman looks up at him disturbed: what kid...?

CUT TO:

19 THE LITTLE RED NINJA SITTING ON A BED IN A CHILD'S ROOM 19

Without his mask, we see now it's a TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY. We look through the doorway at him as he stares down, lost, surrounded by COPS. Finally, he LOOKS UP at us --

REVEAL BATMAN gazing back through the doorway. As MORE COPS BEGIN TO NOTICE HIM -- Gordon, beside him, WHISPERS:

GORDON
We... really gotta go, man...

Batman nods, but stays a moment longer -- the aching, opening chords of **NIRVANA'S "SOMETHING IN THE WAY"** BEGIN; HOLD as Batman stares from somewhere under that mask... an unspoken connection to this newly fatherless boy...

COMMISSIONER SAVAGE (PRELAP)
Tonight, a son lost a father...

20 EXT. MAYOR'S MANSION - FRONT STEPS - PRE-DAWN 20

A press conference; MITCHELL'S WIFE cries behind Savage --

COMMISSIONER SAVAGE
...a wife lost a husband. And I lost a friend. Mayor Mitchell was a fighter for our city and I won't rest until this killer is found...

As **NIRVANA CONTINUES** --

DISTANT PERSPECTIVE ON THE PRESS CONFERENCE - SAME MOMENT

An ENGIRE PURRS; PULL BACK TO REVEAL we're LOOKING PAST A FIGURE -- **THE DRIFTER.** He watches from the shadows across the street on an old, unpainted CAFE RACER MOTORCYCLE; he pulls on a HELMET... CLOSE ON the dark, full face visor --

VOICE OVER
I wish I could say I'm making a difference... but I don't know...

21 EXT. GOTHAM - **MOVING THROUGH THE STREETS** - PRE-DAWN 21

NIRVANA SWELLS as we CHASE the BIKE through LOWER GOTHAM; the PRESS CONFERENCE BLAZES on DECAYING JUMBOTRONS --

VOICE OVER
Murder, robberies, assault -- two years later, they're all up... And now this...

22 -- PASSING TENT CITIES, HALTED CONSTRUCTION SITES UNDER SIGNS: **"A GOTHAM RENEWAL PROJECT"** -- PLASTERED OVER SOME ARE BELLA REÁL CAMPAIGN BILLS: **"TIME FOR A REAL CHANGE"** -- 22

VOICE OVER
The city's eating itself... Maybe it's beyond saving...

23 -- ALONG ONE OF THE BRIDGES SPANNING THE ISLANDS OF GOTHAM -- SKYLINE BEHIND -- A MASSIVE **SEA WALL** BELOW -- 23

VOICE OVER
But I have to try. Push myself...

24 -- UNTIL WE SOAR OVER THE BIKE AS IT TEARS THROUGH A ROLLING CITY PARK -- DOWN A NARROW ROAD -- DISAPPEARING INTO A TUNNEL UNDER A BEAUTIFUL, ARCHING BRIDGE -- WE TIP UP TOWARD THE DISTANCE, TO SEE IT'S HEADING TOWARD -- A GOTHIC 1920S BUILDING BELOW THE PARK: **WAYNE TOWER** -- 24

25 INT. NARROW, OLD TUNNEL - PRE-DAWN 25

The bike rips down a secret passage from a bygone era --

26 INTO THE UNDERGROUND FOUNDATION OF WAYNE TOWER 26

The Drifter SKIDS to a stop, HUNDREDS OF CREATURES all along the rock ceiling STIR ANXIOUSLY TO LIFE -- **BATS**...

VOICE OVER
These nights all roll together, in a rush... behind the mask...

...as he removes his helmet -- and we finally SEE **BRUCE WAYNE** -- handsome, 30, black camo still around his eyes.

CUT TO:

27 SUPER TIGHT -- FINGERS REMOVING CONTACT LENSES -- ON THE CURVED SURFACE OF THE LENSES ARE TINY SENSOR BANDS -- 27

VOICE OVER
Sometimes, in the morning, I have to force myself to remember...

CLOSE ON GRAINY VIDEO FOOTAGE -- the gang member from last night LOOKS AT US as he gets tased in the neck --

VOICE OVER
...everything that happened.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: 27

CLOSE ON A HANDWRITTEN JOURNAL -- PHRASES: **"THURSDAY, OCT. 31"** -- **"NOCTURNAL ANIMAL"** -- **"PUSH MYSELF"** -- a PEN FINISHES the entry -- as the journal shuts, we see THE COVER: **"NOTES & OBSERVATIONS (GOTHAM PROJECT) YR. 2"**

28 REVEAL BRUCE - HIGH ANGLE OVER **"THE CAVE"** - EARLY MORNING 28

NIRVANA ECHOES as Bruce REVIEWS FOOTAGE at a work bench in a giant boiler room turned survivalist chop shop -- PROJECTS IN VARIOUS STATES, including **A HALF-BUILT, BLACK MUSCLE CAR**, both retro and like nothing we've ever seen. A TV plays GC1; the headline, **"MAYOR MITCHELL MURDERED"** -- below it: "ACTING MAYOR TOMLIN TO RUN IN HIS PLACE"

GC1 NEWSCASTER
...this certainly isn't the first time Gotham has been rocked by the murder of a political figure. In fact, in an eerie coincidence it was twenty years ago this month that celebrated billionaire philanthropist, Dr. Thomas Wayne, and his wife Martha were slain during Wayne's own mayoral campaign in a shocking crime that remains unsolved to this day --

Bruce's eyes go to the TV; when from the FREIGHT ELEVATOR steps ALFRED, 50s, muscular, waistcoat and shirtsleeves -- he walks on an elegant CANE, SCAR on his face, eyes on the TV -- seeing him, Bruce resumes work -- Alfred turns to Bruce -- an unspoken tension; Bruce avoids his gaze --

ALFRED
I assume you heard about this...?

BRUCE
Yeah.

Alfred suddenly notices the CONTACTS LENS MURDER SCENE FOOTAGE Bruce is hi-speeding through -- moves closer --

ALFRED
Oh. I see...
(off Mitchell's body)
...dear God...

As the CIPHER fills the screen, Bruce FREEZES the image, PRINTING it -- Alfred looks chilled -- as Bruce works --

ALFRED
The killer left this for Batman?

28 CONTINUED: 28

BRUCE
Apparently.

ALFRED
You're becoming quite a celebrity.
...why is he writing to you?

BRUCE
I don't know yet.

ALFRED
Have a shower. The accounting boys from Wayne Enterprises are coming for breakfast.

BRUCE
Here -- why -- ?

ALFRED
Because I couldn't get you to go there --

BRUCE
I don't have time for this.

ALFRED
(a tense beat)
It's getting serious, Bruce. If this continues, it won't be long before you've nothing left --

BRUCE
I don't care about that. Any of that.

ALFRED
...you don't care about your family's legacy?

BRUCE
What I'm doing is my family's legacy -- and if I can't change things here, if I can't have an effect, then I don't care what happens to me --

ALFRED
That's what I'm afraid of --

BRUCE
Stop. You're not my father, Alfred.

ALFRED
(a thin smile)
I'm... well aware.

28 CONTINUED: (2) 28

Bruce rises -- Alfred watches him go, pained. Then turns to the computer, seeing THUMBNAILS from the lens footage; one is THE BOY IN NINJA COSTUME. He clicks it; the boy looks up, sad. Alfred stares, deeply affected.

Alfred's eyes drift to the PRINTED CIPHER. His gaze fixes on words Bruce has written above the eerie symbols in the Halloween card: **"HE LIES STILL"**...

29 INT. WAYNE TOWER - GRAND FOYER - MOVING - MORNING 29

Atop the staircase, we start on a SET OF DOUBLE DOORS -- a THICK CHAIN coiled crudely through the handles, a PADLOCK sealing us off from whatever is beyond -- Bruce moves past, down stairs, wet hair, pulling on a t-shirt -- muscular but underweight like a rock star -- a street fighter's scars and bruises -- MOVE with him, through the apartment's hotel-like scale -- and neglect that has left dirt and disrepair over former grandeur -- he ENTERS --

THE DINING ROOM

-- to find Alfred at the table, immersed in what looks like a crossword -- without looking up, Alfred points --

ALFRED
Some fresh berries there...

Bruce squints, unaccustomed to morning; grabbing berries, he pulls out sunglasses -- when he sees Alfred's working on the CIPHER; Alfred's interest breaks the ice --

BRUCE
...what're you doing?

ALFRED
Just reminiscing about my days in the Circus. This is actually quite... elusive.

BRUCE
Where'd you get the O's?

ALFRED
"He lies still" is only a partial key. It only gives us H, E, L, I, and S -- so I'm looking for any double symbols to start, trying letters, see where it leads...

BRUCE
Interesting.

CONTINUED:

An ELDERLY MAID appears in the doorway --

ELDERLY MAID
The gentlemen are here.

Alfred discreetly closes his newspaper over the cipher --

ALFRED
See them in please, Dory...

30 THE DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 30

TWO YOUNG EXECUTIVES STARE RIGHT AT US --

ONE OF THE EXECUTIVES
I'm afraid we're at a critical point here --

REVEAL BRUCE -- in SUNGLASSES, stone-faced -- his gaze shifts distractedly to Alfred's newspaper on the table --

ONE OF THE EXECUTIVES
At the very least, we'll need your signature to cover these losses...

Bruce reaches for the newspaper, opens it -- the execs glance at each other, thrown; Alfred smiles, apologetic -- Bruce stares at the SEA OF LETTERS, wheels turning --

ONE OF THE EXECUTIVES (O.S.)
Mr. Wayne...?

BRUCE
(glances blankly up)
...what?

YOUNG EXECUTIVE
I... I need your signature, sir...

And as Bruce signs -- we PRELAP:

BRUCE (V.O.)
What if it isn't a partial key...?

31 BACK IN "**THE CAVE**" - MINUTES LATER 31

Bruce and Alfred work on the cipher on Bruce's computer --

ALFRED
What do you mean?

31 CONTINUED: 31

BRUCE
What if it's the whole key? Ignore the symbols we don't have letters for, use only the letters from "he lies still", and leave the rest --

ALFRED
-- blank, yes -- I understand --
(deleting letters)
-- but that will leave most of the cipher unsolved... I don't see how that -- oh...
(suddenly impressed)
Well.

They gaze at THE LAPTOP: most of the cipher is now blank, but the remaining letters line up like connect-the-dots to form A SINGLE HUGE WORD across the page: "**D R I V E**"

32 INT. GOTHAM CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT - COMMAND CENTER - DAY 32

The room bustles with POLICE and FBI CODEBREAKERS, all fixated on the CIPHER, projected huge on the wall. One of the G.C.P.D. DETECTIVES quietly briefs Gordon --

DETECTIVE
Feds say code could take weeks -- if they can crack it at all --

Gordon's cell rings; he looks: "NO CALLER ID"; answers --

BRUCE (V.O.)
Did Mitchell have a car -- ?

GORDON
I'm sorry, can you hold on, honey?
(to Detective)
My daughter, Barbara --

The Detective nods as Gordon takes a few steps away --

GORDON
(into phone, low)
A car? Yeah, I'm sure -- why...?

33 INT. MAYOR'S MANSION - FREIGHT ELEVATOR - NIGHT 33

Batman and Gordon descend in DARKNESS -- after a beat, Gordon steals a look, studying the visible part of Batman's face -- Batman feels it, turns -- Gordon looks away -- they stare forward again as the DOORS OPEN to --

34 A SUBTERRANEAN GARAGE FILLED WITH PRICELESS EXOTIC CARS -- 34

They walk out, scanning the maze of stunning vehicles...

GORDON
Damn. Where do we even start...?
(eyeing the cars)
You sure this isn't a leap?
"Drive" could mean anything...

BATMAN
You don't trust me?

GORDON
Trust you? You mean like you trust me? It's been two years, I still don't even know who you are, man --

BATMAN
There...

Gordon looks at an ASTON DB11: one of the tires is flat. They approach. Batman kneels, pulling a PAIR OF POULTRY SHEARS out of the tire -- they're COVERED IN DRIED BLOOD.

35 INSIDE THE DB11 35

Batman turns on a UV LIGHT BAR -- searching the console --

GORDON
What're we looking for -- ?

BATMAN
...USB port --

GORDON
-- USB -- ?

Batman stops, struck. Looks at Gordon, who can't see inside the console -- then looks back --

GORDON
What...?

Batman pulls out a **KEY RING USB DRIVE** -- attached to it, in a little clear plastic bag, is a **SEVERED THUMB**...

BATMAN
Thumb. Drive.

GORDON
Jesus.

36 OUTSIDE THE ASTON DB11 - SECONDS LATER 36

They stare at Gordon's field laptop -- as it BEEPS --

GORDON
It's encrypted.

BATMAN (O.S.)
Try this...

Gordon turns... Batman holds up THE BAG WITH THE SEVERED THUMB. Gordon sighs, taking it -- shakes his head, presses the thumb to the drive -- it OPENS --

GORDON
Boy, this guy's hilarious.

SURVEILLANCE PHOTOS pop up: Mayor Mitchell exiting a seedy nightclub with a TWENTY-TWO YEAR OLD IN CLUBWEAR, headed for his Aston DB11, a black eye visible under the Woman's sunglasses; behind them follow UNSAVORY TYPES, a gangster vibe -- one wears a STREET-STYLED, STRIPED TUX --

GORDON
...so much for family values.

BATMAN
...who is she?

GORDON
No idea... But that's the Penguin -- Carmine Falcone's right hand --

BATMAN
-- I know who he is.

When -- a WHOOSH! sound suddenly emits from the laptop!

GORDON
-- what was that --?

GORDON
(clicking windows)
Shit-shit-shit --

BATMAN
What -- ?

GORDON
The mail app -- it just -- it, it sent out the photos! Goddammit! Gotham Post, Gazette, GC1! Jesus -- I'm gonna have to go deal with this, Pete's gonna hit the roof.

BATMAN
(looks at photos)
"He lies still"... About her?

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: 36

GORDON
Maybe... That's the Iceberg Lounge -- it's under the Shoreline Lofts where Falcone's holed up. We'll never get in without a warrant.

BATMAN
(won't stop him)
...yeah...

37 EXT. ICEBERG LOUNGE NIGHTCLUB - **MOVING SHOT** - NIGHT 37

PUSHING toward a deserted warehouse -- a nondescript door in the facade; a LONE SODIUM STREETLAMP FLICKERS, illuminating an old sign: ICEBERG FISH CO -- as BAT BOOTS CLICK purposefully into frame --

38 BLACKNESS 38

SWINGS OPEN to reveal Batman in shadow; CLUB MUSIC booms:

BATMAN
Know who I am?

A HUGE BOUNCER'S eyes give the Bat Suit the once over --

BOUNCER
Yeah, I got an idea.

BATMAN
I wanna see The Penguin.

BOUNCER
Penguin? I don't know what you're talking about, pal.

Batman just stares. The Bouncer shuts the door. A beat, then it opens again. Now there are two of them -- TWINS.

IDENTICAL TWIN BOUNCER
What's the problem?

BOUNCER
Says he wants to see The Penguin.

IDENTICAL TWIN BOUNCER
Penguin? Ain't no Penguin here --

BOUNCER
That's what I tried to tell him --

IDENTICAL TWIN BOUNCER
Get outta here, freak. Ya hear me? Or that little suit's gonna get all full of blood.

(CONTINUED)